



St Patrick's College Jaffna OBA

Melbourne, Australia

P.O.Box 551, Rosanna, Vic 3084



Newsletter 19

July 2013

President's Message

Dear Fellow Patricians

It is with great pleasure I write my first message as President of the Melbourne OBA for the June 2013 newsletter to all Patricians in Victoria. I feel proud to have been elected the President of this Association which came together in Victoria 21 years ago to "socialise and share the Patrician Spirit with benevolence and support our Alma Mater in meaningful ways", and can state with pride that as members, we have met and exceeded our objectives over the years and we continue to do so. Our support of the College in this short period has been tremendous and compares very favourably with the other Alumni Associations with the contributions we have made and with our commitment and our generosity to the College and all of this with a relatively small membership. In the last 7 years alone, we have contributed \$7,500 towards the College's cricket activities, \$1,500 to repair damage caused by "Cyclone Nisha", \$1,500 to help the students from Vanni affected by the war and have sent 18 boxes of books for use by students in the College Library, to name a few of our recent efforts. Our latest fundraising project was towards paying for renovating the altar/sanctuary area of the College Chapel. This has been an enormous success with contributions totalling \$3,880 received to-date. We are truly living up to our objectives and I take great pleasure in stating that we can all feel very proud of what we are achieving as members of the Melbourne OBA.

Our next function is the Patrician Nite to celebrate our 21st birthday to be held on 21 September 2013. I am looking forward to seeing all the members and their families at this event. It is a once a year occasion to meet other Patricians and network, as well as have an enjoyable evening with great entertainment to be provided by other Patricians. Committee and Advisory Panel members are working very hard to make the event a success once again. The event has been a sell-out these past 6 years and we hope it will be a successful event this year as well.

I am aware that there are many young Patricians amongst the new arrivals in Melbourne. I cordially invite them all to join our Association. I would like to request every member, if they know other Patricians, to let us know or advise them to contact us so that we can incorporate their details in our database for communication through the regular newsletter and / or email.

Anandarajan James

President

SPC Jaffna OBA—Melbourne

Established : 1992

Current Membership:..... 31

No. of Patricians in Vic : 130

Annual Membership Fee: \$20.00

WEBSITE: www.spcaustralia.com

EMAIL: secretary@spcaustralia.com

Our Objectives:

- Socialise and share the Patrician spirit with benevolence
- Support our Alma Mater in meaningful ways

Committee — 2013/14

President: Anandarajan James

Secretary: James Joseph

Treasurer : William Nimalraj

Asst. Treasurer : Philip Ravindraraj

Committee Members: Angelo Fernando

Chrys Gunanayagam

Jeyandra Antonipillai

Noel Rajiv

Augustine James

Patrick Rajaratnam

Advisory & Support Panel 2013/14

Alfred Reynald Anton Newton

Cyril Kulendran Dr Anton Mariampillai

Edward Arulnesathan

Gunaratnam Arulanantham

Isidore Manoraj Jeevaranjan Fernando

Jerard Jogaratnam Jerry Antonypillai

Joseph Vijayaratham Reg Cherubim

Vincent C Benedict Vincent Pius

William Rajendram



Oblates, Catholic Church in Jaffna & St. Patrick's

The religious order, Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), was founded 197 years ago, on January 25, 1816, when Father Eugene de Mazenod and four companions came together to preach missions in Provencal, in the rural countryside of southern France. The belief of their founder - whenever bishops requested - was to "re-examine his manpower, cut personnel here and there, and release 2 or 3 men for these new needs" and continuously acted to send missionaries to different parts of the world. After 25 years of intense work in France, Fr Eugene sent his first missionaries to Canada, shortly afterwards to Ceylon and South Africa. The Oblate missionaries made the largest contribution to the development of the Catholic Church in the Jaffna Peninsula and St. Patrick's College. In 1938, Pope Pius XI recognized the Oblates of Mary Immaculate as "Specialists in Difficult Missions."

In 1834, after nearly 300 years when Ceylon was part of the Diocese of Cochin (India), Pope Gregory XVI established Ceylon as a separate Apostolic Vicariate. About 1839 when St Mary's Catholic Church was being built, the Catholics of Jaffna petitioned the Holy See to send a few European priests. This resulted in the arrival in 1843 of a small band of Italian priests incl. Fr. Orazio Bettachini. In 1847, Dr. Mazenod, the founder of the OMI, sent a band consisting of Father Stephen Semeria OMI, Rev Fr Keating & Bro Stephen Gaspard, at the request of (who was by then) Bishop Bettachini. The Jaffna Catholic English School was founded by Bishop Bettachini - the 1st Bishop of Jaffna - in 1850.

In 1857, Rt Rev Dr Stephen Semaria, succeeded Dr. Bettachini, thus becoming the 2nd Bishop of Jaffna. In 1860, the Ceylon School Commission, after representations made by Fr Christophe-Etienne Bonjean, gave an annual grant of one hundred and fifty pounds and also renamed the school, the Jaffna Boys Seminary. In 1861, Bishop Semaria went to Europe and returned with (among others) Brothers Conway and Dowling. With the appointment of Brother Conway as principal of the Boy's seminary, a new era of progress began in the school with ten members of staff. Dr Bonjean who had succeeded Bishop Semaria as Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna on 5 July 1868 - thus becoming the 3rd Bishop of Jaffna - took great interest in developing the Jaffna Boys seminary.

In 1879, the Very Rev Fr Soulier, Visitor General of OMI came on a visit to Jaffna. Bishop Bonjean had left for France in 1879 for the General Chapter of the oblate congregation. On his return to Jaffna in 1880, he decided to amalgamate the preparatory ecclesiastical seminary and the Jaffna Boys seminary under the title of St. Patrick's College and applied to the Department of Public Instruction for registration of the College as a complete High school under the Revised code.

Though Father Stephen Semeria OMI was always interested in raising the indigenous clergy from the beginning, he was able to implement his plan only when he became the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna on 17 August 1856. The Bishop's House of Jaffna became the first Seminary, and there were a few young men who were guided directly by Bishop Semeria OMI. Bro. Paul Stephen Poorey OMI became the first Lankan Oblate scholastic when he made his first Oblation on 12 November 1859.

The ascent of Fr Christopher Bonjean OMI to the seat of Vicar Apostolic of the Apostolic Vicariate of Jaffna on 5 July 1868 marked a beginning of a new era in the history of formation of the local clergy in Sri Lanka. Encouraged by the instructions sent by the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith in 1869 to Vicars Apostolic urging them to take steps to promote indigenous clergy, he set up a full-fledged seminary in the same year. Initially, both the students for Oblate and diocesan priesthood of various stages, and their formators were accommodated in a section of the Bishop's House of Jaffna.

In 1874 the seminary was placed under the patronage of Saint Martin of Tours, and in 1878 a large piece of land was purchased in its vicinity and the seminary was shifted there. Thus, St Martin's Seminary of Jaffna became the first Catholic Seminary in Sri Lanka. The first superior of St. Martin's Seminary was Father Charles Louis Massiet OMI. History records that Father Nicholas Saverimuthu Sandrasagara OMI, from

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Oblates, Catholic Church in Jaffna & St. Patrick's

(contd from Page 2)

Jaffna, born on 1 October 1842 and ordained on 29 December 1876, was the first Sri Lankan Oblate Priest and the first Sri Lankan student of the Seminary to be ordained a Priest.

Rev Fr Patrick Dunne - who came to Jaffna as Br. Dunne in April 1885 - was the 5th Rector of St Patrick's College. During his time, the College came to be regarded as the best in the island for its academic achievements. Rev. Fr Dunne found the time amid his duties as Principal to publish a system of shorthand he had invented for Tamil and in 1900, he published a concise Tamil - English Dictionary.

When St Patrick's College decided to form Houses, the 1st 4 letters of the alphabet were used and the houses were named after the various luminaries in its establishment and development - Abraham (a student of the Jaffna Boys' Seminary and appointed a teacher in the sixties), Bishop Bonjean, Brother Conway & Father Dunne. Subsequently, Conway House was renamed Matthews House and Abraham House gave way to Long House. Rev Fr Charles Matthews OMI became Rector of the College in 1905 and Rev Fr Timothy Long OMI in 1936. Rev. Fr John Guyomar OMI was Rector for 3 years from 1921 to 1924 and when he was consecrated as the 7th Bishop of Jaffna on January 16, 1924, Fr. Matthews resumed duties as Rector. The Matthews - Long era from 1905 to 1954 was the College's golden era. During this time, the College consistently came in the Top 3 in the various national examinations held at the conclusion Grades 5, 8 & 10. Fr Long was also instrumental and played a large part in the building of the new Jaffna Library and after it opened, a statue erected in his honour outside the Library still stands despite the damage caused by arson to the building in 1981 and many of its 97,000 books and manuscripts. The 2 main blocks of the College are named after Matthews & Long. The honour board of the staff of the College, thus included many Oblates—the “heavyweights” Matthews & Long in addition to Dunne, Fr. John Mary Couchouron OMI (ref: newsletter, December 2012 – www.spcaustralia.com), Bishop Guyomar, Fr. Arulnesan, to name a few. 17 of the 24 Principals of the College were Oblates and numerous other brothers and priests of the Order taught at the College.

In the Diocese of Jaffna, from the time of the appointment of Bishop Semeria as the Vicar Apostolic of Jaffna on July 5, 1868 until the death of the last native Bishop, Bishop Jerome Emilianuspillai on July 17, 1972, there had been a number of Oblate Bishops and priests fully involved in the work of evangelization.

Nallur Swami Gnana Prakasar OMI (1875-1947) played a defining role in the revival and expansion of Catholicism in Jaffna in the first quarter of the 20th century. Swami Gnana Pragasar was a legend in his own lifetime: tall and ascetic, he was an eloquent and compelling orator, a linguist and was a master of many Oriental and Western languages; a social worker, he laboured untiringly for the uplift of the under-privileged. A convert himself, he was respected for his vast knowledge of Hindu and Saiva Sidhanta philosophies, a critical savant, he single-handedly authored “An Etymological and Comparative Lexion of the Tamil Language” - an unfinished opus, but a worthy testament to his brilliant scholarship. He wrote many books in the fields of history, philosophy, religion, language and literature, some of which are being treated as source-books by scholars.

There are over 4,440 Oblates worldwide - young men, old men, Oblates in formation, priests, brothers. Of this total, 580 are in formation, having already made their first commitment. The highest number in formation is in Africa, with 165 young men in training. There are more than 700 in Africa, 1450 in Europe, 630 in Asia, 360 in Latin America, 750 in Canada, 480 in the United States. In Victoria, Mazenod College, St John Vianney's Church, St Mary's Seminary (where the annual Good Friday Way of the Cross is regularly attended by thousands of Catholics) & “Rosies” Youth Mission are all Oblate-managed Institutions.

Compiled from many sources incl. the book “Notes on Jaffna—Chronological, Historical, Biographical—From 1505 onwards by John H. Martyn, an article titled “The Birth-pangs of St Patrick's College” by the former Bishop of Jaffna, Rt. Rev. Dr. B. Deogupillai, & Öblate Communications—Omni World”,

College Chapel Renovation Fund

Patricians who attended the Global Reunion 2012 held in Jaffna requested that the College Chapel, which is in a state of disrepair -after being affected by the many disasters over the years - be renovated. Following an appeal by the Rector estimating the total cost of the renovation at over \$45,000, the Committee decided that the part of the renovation relating to the altar/sanctuary area would be funded by the Melbourne OBA. The following Patricians from Victoria and interstate have contributed to-date a total of \$3,880 towards this project:

Adrian (Jerry) Alphonsus

Alfred Reynald

Anandarajan James

Antony Gratian

Berchmans Tennakone

Chrys Gunanayagam

Cornelius Sebastiampillai

Dr Anton Mariampillai

Dr Bastly Douglas

Dr Bruno Jesuthasan

Dr Florentine Singarayar

Dr John Keith Abraham

Dr P Prathipan

Edward Arulnesathan

James Joseph

James Premanandarajah

Jeevaranjan Fernando

Jerry Anthonypillai

Jeyandra Antonipillai

Jeyanthakumar Joseph

John Pathinathan

Mariampillai Jesurajah

Nimal Augustine

Noel Rajiv

Philip Ravindraraj

Priyaan Johnpillai

Vincent (Chandran) Benedict

Vincent Pius

William Nimalraj

Notice Board

Patrician Nite 2013

Saturday 21 September 2013

21st Birthday Party

Venue: Glen Waverley Community Centre

700 Waverley Road, Glen Waverley
(Mel 71B4)

Early start at **6.30 pm**

Variety Show: **அதிரடி மன்னர்கள்**

& **ÖLD is.. GOLD musical show**

Music: DJ Music

Smorgasbord: **"RICH MAHAL"**

Wine and Soft Drink provided for each table

BYO liquor

Raffle

Presentation of Australia Day Cricket / Rounders Trophies

Tickets - \$35 (Children under 12 - \$15)

The members and families attending the Patrician Nite have been increasing every year. The function is again held this year in a large hall and is open to all Patricians, their families and friends. A special "treat" this year with plays & sounds from school years past & performed by Patricians, which promises to be "hilarious". Each table can seat 10 people and members are welcome to invite their friends to come along and spend an enjoyable evening – dining and dancing as well as meeting other Patricians and make new friends. It is a once-an-year occasion for Patricians to celebrate and foster fellowship and network with others. A Committee/Advisory Panel Member will be in touch with every Patrician. If you have not been contacted, please call Anandan on 0431 571 066 to obtain the tickets.

Patricians' generosity by contributing to this project is gratefully acknowledged and complimented. We have already remitted \$3,500 (Rs.430,500) to the Rector who has written saying: ***"Together with the staff and students, I thank each and every member of the Melbourne OBA who have contributed generously to this fund"***.